UC CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ON UAS SAFETY

Newsletter – October 10, 2016

**STUDENT CLUBS & DRONES**

As drones become cheaper and easier to purchase, more and more students are bringing them to our UC campuses.  One area of concern amongst the campuses has been in addressing use of drones by Registered Student Organizations (RSOs).  Depending on the situation, RSO usage may fall into either 'Recreational' use or 'Non-Recreational'-use.

**RECREATIONAL USE**

Recreational use of drones is regulated by 14 CFR 101 (updated from Section 336 of the 2012 FAA Modernization Act), more commonly known as the 'model aircraft' regulations.  RSO's only qualify for 'model aircraft' regulations if and only if:

1.      They are not compensated for their flight

2.      They are not compensated for any media collected

3.      Any media is collected for a personal purpose

4.      The flight is not in furtherance of a business (regardless of compensation)

5.      The flight is not incidental to a business purpose (regardless of compensation)

Groups that commonly fall under recreational use include: drone enthusiast clubs, drone-racing groups, drone photography groups.  Engineering clubs are often in gray area for many campuses.  Unlike many RSO's, they can be closely affiliated with Schools or Departments, or professional societies and as a result, their 'recreational' purpose can be fuzzy.  The FAA has recently clarified that these groups are considered recreational as long as they follow the qualifications for recreational-use.

**NON-RECREATIONAL USE**

When a drone is used for a non-recreational purpose, it is regulated by 14 CFR 107 (the new drone laws).  Under these regulations, the operator must have a Remote Pilot Certificate from the FAA.  The most common scenario of this for RSO's is in the case of a student group using a drone to take aerial imagery or video of an event, such as recording a concert or for group publicity.  Depending on the ownership of the aircraft, the group may be responsible for obtaining UAS insurance.  Another common scenario is a student group who brings in a performer who brings their own UAS operator.  The performer's UAS operation is considered non-recreational, and would require the operator to have the correct FAA authorization.

**STUDENT COMPETITIONS**

Student competitions are also another common source for confusion.  The FAA considers student competitions for unmanned aircraft to recreational as the long as the students are not compensated for flying, only awarded for winning.  Nearly every campus has a group that competes in one of many unmanned aircraft competitions. Two of the largest competitions are the American Institute of Aeronautics & Astronautics (AIAA)'s 'Design, Build & Fly' competition ([http://www.aiaadbf.org/](http://www.aiaadbf.org/" \t "_blank)) and the Association of Unmanned Vehicles International (AUVSI)'s SUAS Competition ([http://www.auvsi-suas.org/](http://www.auvsi-suas.org/" \t "_blank)).  Last year, in the Design, Build & Fly competition, UC Irvine took 3rd, UCLA #23,  UCSD #27, UC Merced #55, UC Berkeley #68. In the AUVSI SUAS Competition, UC Riverside took 8th place and UCSD 11th place.

As student groups start to plan their activities for the year, make sure they are aware of the regulations regarding drone usage and how it may affect their events.

**If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Center at[UASSafety@ucmerced.edu](mailto:UASSafety@ucmerced.edu" \t "_blank) or [(209) 201-2051](tel:%28209%29%20201-2051" \t "_blank).**

**OTHER RESOURCES**

Register your UAS ([https://registermyuas.faa.gov/](https://registermyuas.faa.gov/" \t "_blank))

Fly for Fun ([https://www.faa.gov/uas/getting\_started/fly\_for\_fun/](https://www.faa.gov/uas/getting_started/fly_for_fun/" \t "_blank))

Fly for Work/Business ([https://www.faa.gov/uas/getting\_started/fly\_for\_work\_business/](https://www.faa.gov/uas/getting_started/fly_for_work_business/" \t "_blank))

FAA Frequently Asked Questions ([https://www.faa.gov/uas/faqs/](https://www.faa.gov/uas/faqs/" \t "_blank))

Summary of Part 107 ([https://www.faa.gov/uas/media/Part\_107\_Summary.pdf](https://www.faa.gov/uas/media/Part_107_Summary.pdf" \t "_blank))

FAA Regulations and Policies ([https://www.faa.gov/uas/resources/uas\_regulations\_policy/](https://www.faa.gov/uas/resources/uas_regulations_policy/" \t "_blank))

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Contact [erm@ucop.edu](mailto:erm@ucop.edu" \t "_blank) to be added to the UC-UAS-RESEARCH-L listserv